



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

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2006 Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

Customer Focus

Two Farms in South County Are Saved From Development

Development rights on two farms were purchased by the South County Land Trust. USDA NRCS, through the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program contributed about \$200,000 towards the purchase of the two parcels. These properties will now remain open space land in perpetuity and cannot be subdivided or built upon.

Over the past 150 years, cows have roamed the Browning farm; potatoes, alfalfa and corn have grown in its fertile soil. The Browning family has farmed here since 1850. The land offers passersby a glimpse of simpler times, with its great round hay bales rising in the field at haying time. By selling his 15 acre parcel, Ralph Browning has ensured that the land will be forever preserved.

The other farm is owned by Ellen Elmstrom and is across from the Carpenter Grist Mill on Moonstone Beach Road. Silage corn is still grown on the fields. The purchase of this parcel will add to a corridor of protected open space that stretches more than two miles. The preservation of this land will ensure the continued rural nature of the area, enhancing the historic atmosphere surrounding the mill. South County is one of the fastest growing areas in Rhode Island.

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Rhode Island Summary

Overview

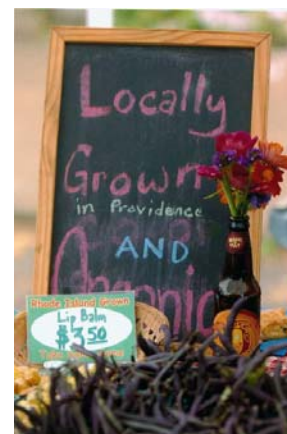
Despite Rhode Island's small size, agriculture in the state is as diverse as in our neighboring states. The EQIP program addresses problems that reflect that diversity. While there are over 800 farming operations in Rhode Island, a state with just over 600,000 total acres, many of these farms are operated by producers who work full-time off the farm. As such, NRCS has worked with its partners to develop the EQIP program to meet the needs of both the full-time commercial farmers as well as the smaller "hobby" farms that are becoming more common. NRCS has benefited Rhode Island's natural resources by installing: improved irrigation systems that conserve water, alternate sources of water for large volume irrigators that enhance riparian systems; comprehensive nutrient management systems that include waste storage, land application, and fencing; and a variety of land management practices to protect water quality

Accomplishments

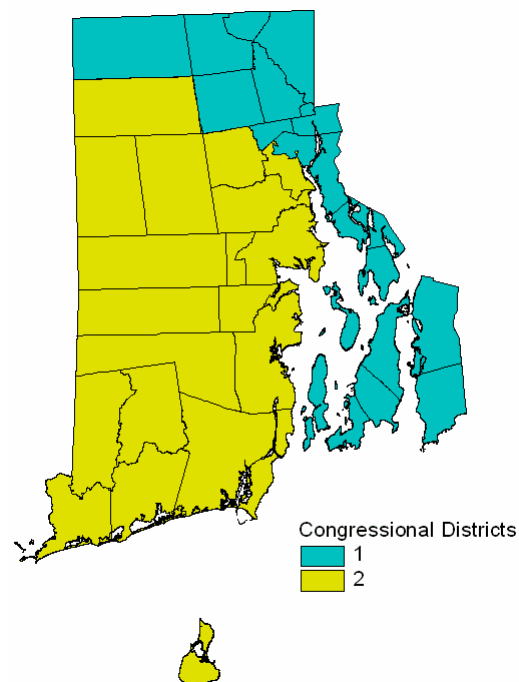
NRCS received applications from five entities seeking funds from the 2006 FRPP to assist them with the protection of 11 farms. The farms represent a cross section of Rhode Island agriculture and the hopes of the landowners to preserve both productive farmland as well as Rhode Island's rural heritage. The farms ranged in size from 15 acres to 119 acres. The landowners range from younger farmers who are actively farming to retired persons seeking to preserve the heritage of their land. A variety of farms were represented – fruit, vegetables, livestock, and vineyards. Rhode Island received \$3,695,125 in FY 2006 funds to distribute among the applicants. Applicants were ranked according to an established FRPP scoring system and funds were allocated to five new applicants and funds were increased to two prior applicants due to unanticipated high acquisition costs.

Outlook

Public support for funding farmland protection and other open space initiatives in Rhode Island has held firm over the past twenty years and the people of Rhode Island continue to show their commitment to farmland preservation. Past efforts by State, local government, and private organizations have yielded many wonderful successes, but there are still many acres of farmland at risk of development. As farmland owners' age and family situations change, the need to receive cash value for farmland begins to outweigh the ability to keep the land in agriculture despite the farmer's desires to maintain the farm. To date, the number of willing sellers has outpaced the available funds to protect farmland. We anticipate that our cooperating entities will continue to actively preserve farmland over the next decade.



Rhode Island's FRPP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District



Fiscal Year 2006			Cumulative Total (1996 – 2006)	
Congressional Districts	FRPP Dollars	Number of New Farms to be preserved	FRPP Dollars	Number of farms projected to be preserved
District 1	\$2,400,000	1	\$8,220,054	16
District 2	\$786,125	2	\$5,226,225	19
State Totals	\$3,186,125	*3	\$13,446,279	35

*Five farms were selected for funding in 2006, but two of the five farms were previously selected in prior years. Funding was added to prior year funds due to unanticipated high acquisition costs.

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